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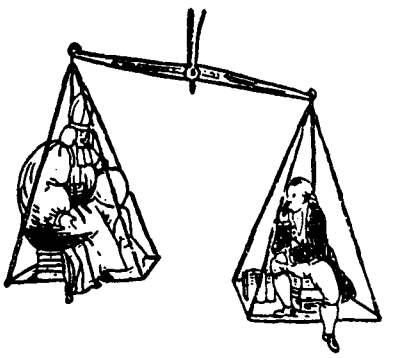

JOHN C. MEAGHER

CREATING A CHRISTIAN IDENTITY

ALL IN THE (DALEY) FAMILY

RALPH WHITEHEAD, JR.

ANNE FREMANTLE

PADRAIC COLUM 1881-1972

MICHAEL MURRAY

I WAS A TEENAGE JESUS

REVIEWS: JAN B. GORDON on **JOYCE CAROL OATES** BERNARD G. MURCHLAND on **ALIENA** **COMMUNES**

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NEWS & VIEWS

To Harrisburg, With Love

The Official Catholic Directory lists 295 bishops in the United States; Lord knows how many thousands there are in the world. Whatever, three sent messages of encouragement on the opening of the trial in Harrisburg of Father Philip Berrigan and the seven "co-conspirators" in the alleged plot to discombobulate Henry Kissinger and Washington's steam heat.

The three: Archbishop Helder Camara of Olinda-Recife, Brazil; Auxiliary Bishop Thomas J. Gumbleton of Detroit; Bishop Carroll T. Dozier of Memphis. The messages:

HELDER CAMARA: ". . . One need not enter into judgment on the course of action followed by these men and women to know that their trial is an occasion which invites us to explore creative ways of violence. The defendants remind us again of the mysterious power of force without violence. In this they are faithful to the great tradition of Jesus and his gospel. I support these eight men and women and all like them in their struggle, and call upon all people of goodwill to open their minds and hearts to the truth and life that will be offered to them during this trial."

GUMBLETON: ". . . It would be unfortunate . . . if these men and women were seen by their fellow Americans only as individuals who were publicly charged with conspiracy to destroy government property and kidnap a government official. It is important for us to understand that for the Harrisburg 8 and a small minority of the like-minded people, the Vietnam war was a burning issue before it began to trouble the consciences of other Americans. It is important, too, that we realize that they have been consistently committed to a *non-violent* opposition to what they saw was the immoral violence that America was visiting on Vietnam."

DOZIER (addressed to the Harrisburg Defense Committee): "The cause of peace, which you espouse, is burning brighter because of the prophetic witness of those with whom you are associated. Their witness must be understood by all of us who receive the benefits of their witness."

Fusion for Kicks

To *Science* magazine we owe the sobering exchange between Edward C. Creutz, assistant director for research, National Science Foundation, and Congressman Craig Hosmer (D-Calif.) on the status and future of controlled thermonuclear fusion.

Creutz advocated before the Joint Committee on Atomic Research an accelerated program that would bring about electric power from controlled fusion by 1990, ten years earlier than generally predicted. His eagerness clashed with the skepticism of Hosmer, who, in *Science*'s words, "chided scientists for their proclivity to do what seems possible mainly because it seems possible."

The exchange (abridged):

HOSMER: Doctor, if for some unforeseeable reason it turns out that we don't get [a practical fusion reactor] until the year 2010, is the sky going to fall in? Will everybody freeze? Is the world going to be different?

CREUTZ: . . . I'm sure it will be a much less interesting place if we have not solved this exciting problem."

HOSMER: Exciting to whom? You will be dead and I will be dead by that time anyway.

CREUTZ: Not only to scientists is it exciting but you talk to any of your constituents and I think you will find this is an exciting thing, if we can get energy from seawater.

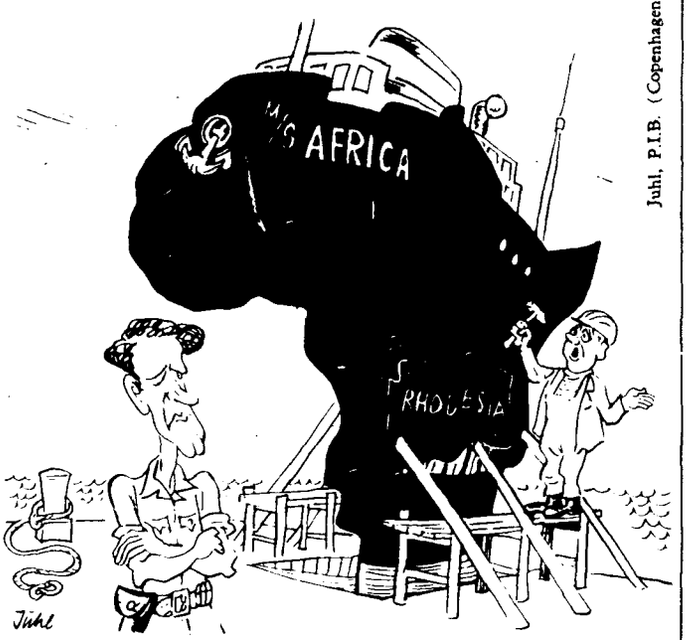
HOSMER: We are not doing this thing for kicks, Doctor, PhD. kicks or otherwise. This is something we have to evaluate on a scale of necessity to the world. . . . Just because it makes people at Princeton and Oak Ridge and Livermore and places like that feel good to work on this thing is no sound reason to work on it at all, or to push it 10 years ahead.

CREUTZ: It's not too bad a reason. . . . If it makes people feel good that is a pretty good reason. . . .

HOSSMER: . . . Why don't we just have a two-year moratorium on any kind of experimental work at all and make these fellows go to their offices and their slide rules and blackboards and do some thinking . . . so they are not wasting a lot of time bending tin, when they ought to be deciding what ought to be done before they are out doing it?

CRUETZ: . . . You can't sit back and only think about nature. You have to get your hand on her, too.

HOSMER: Sometimes it looks like too many fingers in the pie . . .



Juhl, P.I.B. (Copenhagen)

"But the corrosion is coming from inside!"

Odds and Ends

—A Latinamerica Press survey accents what little meaning government by popular election has in most of Latin America. Of the 19 major Latin nations, eight are ruled by military dictatorships, and one by a civilian dictator. In most of the countries that have elections, adds LP, only a small minority of the adult population qualifies to vote, and this electorate is effectively controlled by one or two political parties.

—Gallup's latest figures on weekly church attendance in the U.S. provide no consolations for Catholic officials. They place the Sunday Mass turn-out at 57 percent, down from 71 percent in 1964.

—Clare Boothe Luce, who recently disabused a Westchester County women's-lib conference of the notion she knew nothing about common folk by explaining she made it a point to eat with the help, has offered another unique reason to explain why she does not object to the Nixon Administration's wage and price controls: "My cook is much happier this month than she was six months ago." Presumably, cook is scraping up the food money from her own purse.

JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Lion-izing the Past

Huntington Beach, Ca.

To the Editors: In the issue of Jan. 14, Isidore Silver discusses *The Last Picture Show* by Peter Bogdanovich and it seems to me misses out on a very important point. Sam the Lion may be a representative of the past, a past Mr. Silver categorizes as a "past of human decency, hope, and vitality," yet the problem with the myth of the Old West is that the human decency part sticks in the throat. The movie admired within the movie, *Red River,* opens with a scene of brutality in which the *hero* (John Wayne of course) shoots a Mexican who has come up to tell him that the land he is on belongs to another. It is apparently all right to steal and kill provided the victims are Mexican for presumably (even today, judging by events of the very recent past) Mexicans don't really count as human. The myth is hardly as benign and harmless as Mr. Silver infers. The vitality of the "yip" is the seduction to get one to swallow the rest.

HARVEY SHELENY

Christmas Cave-In

Evanston, Ill.

To the Editors: After scraping through another Christmas, I came across Joseph Blenkinsopp's article, "Why Keep On Celebrating Christmas?" in your December 24 issue. *Exactly,* I thought, and read on. As willing to abandon "historical and factual truth" as the next man, I pored over Mr. Blenkinsopp's text to discover what I might put in the place of this truth.

The cave, I gather, is his answer, and it is one that appeals to me greatly. I've often thought of withdrawing to a cave during the Christmas season, and if I could "return to the cosmic and psychic center" by such a withdrawal, so much the better. I have no idea what "the cosmic and psychic center" is or why I should find it in a

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Front cover illustration of Padraic Colum: from sculpture by Alfeo Faggi

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THE QUARTERBACK'S PEACE

The President's decision to disclose his Administration's three years of secret negotiations over Vietnam has demonstrated once again the political qualities for which he is sometimes admired: pragmatism, intelligence, ingenuity, and skill in disarming his domestic critics by dramatically baptizing their ideas—all with a suddenness that both utilizes the power of his office and leaves even his more articulate opponents off balance.

His most recent proposal is, at first glance, in many ways a good one, even with its ironies and unanswered questions. It calls for the total withdrawal of our forces. It seems to allow what the Thieu government never permitted, the free participation of all parties in an internationally supervised election—thus indicating that the President, who militantly supported the anti-Communist rationale of our Vietnam intervention from the very beginning, is now at least theoretically willing to see Communism win out. Perhaps the most sensible and just element of our proposal is our offer to rebuild the land, North and South, we have destroyed. Mr. Henry A. Kissinger has stated that our "honor" would not allow us to think of these funds, reportedly 7.5 billion dollars, as reparations. We suggest that it is precisely our honor that should make us see them in that way. Nor should we allow ourselves the American luxury of believing that any fixed sum would be adequate repayment for fields and forests laid waste and millions of refugees uprooted from their ancestral homes.

Meanwhile we should mention a few factors that put the President's speech in perspective. Its timing smothered the negative reaction to his budget message the day before and seemed aimed at dampening the threat that the wives of some of the war prisoners would campaign against him in New Hampshire. It is the President who has magnified the prisoner of war issue to its present proportions. He has emphasized the prisoners' sufferings and used their plight to justify his own militancy. Now his refusal to set a withdrawal date that might gain their release has put him politically on the defensive and pushed him into another public justification of his policies. The President's timing also hints of desperation. He had expanded the war into Laos and Cambodia in his other dramatic shows of force; but our legates there have been losing heavily, and the enemy in Vietnam, now armed with new Soviet tanks, is said to be gathering its might for a new Tet offensive to coincide with the President's flight to Peking. Our

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initially shattering experience in the 1968 Tet attack began to turn a disillusioned American public against the war. It is entirely possible that diminished and war-weary American and South Vietnamese troops will find it increasingly difficult to hold the line in the final months of the conflict. Perhaps the foreboding of defeat has pressed this unusually secretive President to expose his own secret diplomacy. The President has also realized to his surprise that the war is still an election issue, in spite of our troop withdrawal and the proclaimed "success" of Vietnamization.

Questions. If we are committed to free elections, how can Thieu's suppressed opposition have a reasonable chance when he will retain control until one month before the election? Thieu reportedly agreed to our plan because he was confident it would not be accepted. How can the North be expected to believe we want peace when we step up the bombing of their roads and homes as we make our offer? What of our air bases in Thailand, our CIA-trained army in Laos and our carriers off shore? Will they too be withdrawn, or are we determined to brandish our might on the borders of Indochina for the indefinite future? And, to what extent can the President project a new image of credibility when he reveals discussions he was supposed to keep secret? Xuan Thuy, the North Vietnamese Paris delegate whom Mr. Kissinger respects, makes a point: "If Mr. Nixon cannot keep such a promise, then what credibility will his other statements have?" Meanwhile the Administration prosecutes Daniel Ellsberg for releasing historical documents of a much less sensitive nature. Finally, how can he unite the nation when he can't pass up the old Nixon innuendo that his critics have been duped by the enemy?

The main flaw in the President's address is that he is still trying to deal with the image, rather than the reality, of the war. On one hand he is trying to "win," by a combination of military muscle and diplomatic pseudo-events, the war goals which history will show should not have been sought. The President, who codenamed himself "Quarterback" for this diplomacy, has built his distorted vision of the American Dream around winning; and, as a recent study in the *Nation* (Jan. 31, 1972) explains, the Kissinger-Nixon limited-war strategy is based on graduated amounts of destruction out of proportion to what the enemy will gain by holding out, interrupted by "breathing spaces" for diplomatic contacts. So far, neither the destruction nor the "breathing spaces" have worked. On the other hand, if we cannot win, the President would at least have it appear we have always been right. That can't be done. We predict that a continued strategy of well-timed dramatic announcements will lead only to public boredom and disillusionment.

Any clever leader can extricate us from Vietnam with a minimum loss of American lives. A great leader would have to tell the people the truth. Life is not a cosmic football game. Even Ernest Hemingway knew that winning isn't the *only* thing. A great President would have to begin mustering all of our deepest spiritual resources—our tolerance, compassion and humility: those qualities that enable a mature people to incorporate defeat into its national self-understanding without a loss of legitimate national pride.

●●●●●●●●●●●●●●

THE DUMPING OF HANRAHAN

ALL IN THE (DALEY) FAMILY

Shortly before the 1948 national elections, someone asked Jacob Arvey if the Democrats would do well. At the time, Arvey was chairman of the Democratic Organization of Cook County. For Illinois, he'd put together a '48 state ticket led by Paul Douglas and Adlai Stevenson and aimed at attracting two emergent groups of voters: the industrial unions and the foreign-policy conscious veterans of World War II. He'd also just helped to pick President Harry Truman to run for another term, yet only after a scarcely-concealed Arvey mission to Europe to try vainly to recruit another White House candidate for the Democrats, Dwight Eisenhower. Clearly, then, Arvey was a man of the properly national—indeed, international—perspective to answer such a question.

And he didn't hesitate a moment before doing so. "Things look just great," he declared. "Our candidate for state's attorney is leading all the polls."

Even though Jacob Arvey has long since given way to Mayor Richard Daley, this oft-retold scrap of machine lore still applies. For the state's attorney of Cook County is the chief prosecutor for the Chicago area. This office —legally and logically—is critical to the survival of Daley's Organization. Here's where any kind of Thomas Dewey-style investigations of the machine's network of money and influence must begin. The idea, then, is for Mayor Daley to make sure the desktop of the state's attorney's office feels only loyal and lazy shanks.

At one point, the job fell into hostile hands for four years. The 1956 Eisenhower landslide swept Benjamin Adamowski into office. A renegade Democrat, he knew where the Organization's bodies were buried. It took him more than two years even to get to the graveyard gate, though. First, he needed to discharge the Democratic staff of prosecutors. He found only a few reliable lawyers to replace them, and they usually lacked prosecutorial experience. Adamowski was too poor an administrator to whip them into shape quickly. His in-

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vestigative staff consisted of politically-sponsored Chicago policemen, so a similar set of housecleaning problems came up here, too. Still, the last 18 months of Adamowski's term saw him break three major Organization scandals—including the 1960 exposure of a burglary ring inside the police department.

As the '60 elections came up, the Organization turned desperately to Daniel Ward. As dean of the DePaul Law School, he ranked as a blue-ribbon candidate. He defeated Adamowski narrowly. The threat of anti-machine prosecutions ceased. For six years, Ward ran a clean but languid office. He then joined the Illinois Supreme Court and his chief deputy, John Stamos, succeeded by Organization appointment to the prosecutor's job. He kept alive Ward's style—the conviction of Richard Speck highlighted his stewardship—yet, as a Greek, he stood outside the Organization's inner circle. So, as the '68 elections neared, Mayor Daley turned to Edward Hanrahan.

He was the U.S. attorney for the Chicago area. He'd just built a strong press record by successfully prosecuting several Syndicate crime cases. At the same time, however, he'd scrupulously avoided bringing charges against any of the Organization's alleged fellow travelers of the mob. Moreover, he was a protégé of Thomas Keane, whose power in the Organization is second only to Mayor Daley's. He was a graduate of Notre Dame and the Harvard Law School—a nice combination for a fast-moving Chicago pol. His campaign staff put up thousands of Hanrahan posters—the slogan: "Criminals *dread* his election!"—and he led Cook County's '68 ticket, running far ahead of Hubert Humphrey.

Unlike Daniel Ward, Hanrahan was a man whose ambitions looked far beyond the bench. It wasn't long before he tried to push an aggressive set of prosecutions. As his target, he chose the black youth gangs of Chicago's South Side. Politically, it was a safe choice: whites and middle-class blacks alike feared the guns and shakedowns of the gangs. The defenders of the gangs—particularly of the highly-publicized Blackstone Rangers—leaned to radical chic enthusiasms and silly rhetoric. They were easy pickings for Hanrahan's public scorn.

His war against gangs (as he called it) didn't fare well, however. Many experienced prosecutors quit his staff. They took their savvy into criminal defense work (including gang cases) where they used it against their greenhorn replacements. The media became hostile, as well, after Hanrahan accused them of romanticizing the gangs. As his office began to lose critical cases (eventually, it would bungle its prosecution of a gang's murder of a policeman), Hanrahan would alibi by attacking the judges—stanch Organization men though they were. His problem was his temper: he was mean and erratic and he turned his anger on his staff, the reporters, and the bench. Even the short-fused Conspiracy 7 prosecutor, Thomas Foran, conceded of Hanrahan: "Eddie's too much of a hothead."

As his record slipped, Hanrahan fell back on what he felt was a reliable outfit: the F.B.I. As a U.S. attorney, he'd made his name simply by prosecuting the cases already built by the relatively skilled agents of the bureau. It was a nice system for him and he wanted to return to it, particularly since his own staff wasn't delivering for him. At the time—the middle of 1969—the F.B.I. was putting a priority on Black Panther cases. If Hanrahan was shopping for tips and evidence, this was the F.B.I.'s line of merchandise—the Panther menace. It was pretty much like the Ranger menace, and far less of a strain; there were 6,000 Rangers, but only a handful of Chicago-based Panthers, so cleaning up was a finite job. Hanrahan bought it.

Panthermania led to the late-1969 raid on a West Side apartment, where two of Illinois' officers—Fred Hampton and Mark Clark—were killed by several of the 99 bullets fired by an F.B.I.-tipped raiding party of Hanrahan's men. The details of the raid and its aftermath and its two special grand jury investigations and the indictment of Hanrahan (and 13 others) on conspiracy-to-obstruct justice charges—all of these are well known, even outside of Cook County.

What's important here is this: For the first time, the Organization's control of Cook County's justice system was opened up to a thorough examination at almost every step. The police, the coroner's office, the grand jury system, the investigating and prosecuting staffs of the state's attorney, the judiciary, the docile bar—just about everyone but the keepers of the jails came under fire. At the same time, a barely competent judge—Joseph Power, a neighbor of Mayor Daley—alienated the established bar and the media by verbally roughing up a respected lawyer, the special prosecutor of Hanrahan, Barnabas Sears. Hanrahan clearly was a liability to the Organization.

Shortly before the December slatemaking meetings of the Organization, Mayor Daley offered the state's attorney's nomination to Thomas Foran, secretly. Foran wanted to run for governor and didn't intend to give up his six-figure private law practice for anything less than the State House. Besides, he told the mayor, he'd feel obliged as state's attorney to begin investigations of at least four of Chicago's 50 Democratic ward leaders. Word of Foran's threat leaked to many of the ward bosses, and, since the unlucky four were not named, dozens of these Democrats began to worry. And it was easy for them to reach a conclusion: Eddie Hanrahan may have made a few mistakes, but he never threatened to turn on the Organization.

Hanrahan's reslating was virtually routine. Congressman Ralph Metcalfe led a protest against Hanrahan by several of the black ward leaders. Another black, however, Claude Holman—Metcalfe's rival for the ear of

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Mayor Daley and the mantle of the late boss of the South Side, William Dawson—spoke against Metcalfe. I know we'll carry my ward big for Hanrahan, Holman reportedly told the closed session of slaters. This black split gave the pro-Hanrahan leaders the opening they needed.

The next 10 days undid the Hanrahan decision, however. The Democratic candidate for governor, Paul Simon, currently the lieutenant governor, stepped into a Downstate gathering of farmers to attack the Republican state record. He couldn't say a word about it. Instead, the crowd wanted to know why Hanrahan, an indicted man, was allowed onto the Cook County ticket. Simon's runningmate, Neil Hartigan, considered at the age of 33 to be an heir to Mayor Daley, ran into similar reactions. Even Congressman Roman Pucinski, a conservative and the candidate for the U.S. Senate, found his audiences similarly troublesome. The three got together and agreed: even outside of Cook County, Hanrahan was an issue—a liability. They told Mayor Daley. His response was: O.K. but you three better tell Hanrahan yourselves. So the Organization's inner circle listened one Sunday afternoon as the three of them informed Hanrahan of his threat to their chances. Ralph Metcalfe also repeated his misgivings. Then, one of the ward bosses pushed a pile of documents across the table to Hanrahan. They were the withdrawal papers to take his name off the March 21 primary ballot. They required only his signature. Hanrahan exploded, refused to sign, and fled.

(Later, newsmen asked Mayor Daley if Hanrahan showed any anger during the session. The mayor straightened his face and slipped his voice into its mock-innocence gear and replied: "Angry? Why, he *never* gets angry!" Then he burst into laughter.)

The Organization put Judge Raymond Berg on the ballot for state's attorney 24 hours later. Thousands of the signatures on his petitions happened to be forged by over-eager precinct captains. Legally, this wasn't enough to affect his candidate's status. Still, the publicity flap hurt his image as one of the Organization's blue ribbon boys. He'd come up as a C.Y.O. athlete, a Cambridge-trained legal scholar, a public defender for the federal courts, and chief judge of the Cook County Traffic Court. He has a following among Scandinavian communal groups. He's young (38), a family man, mild of manner, and doesn't lose his temper publicly. He'll rehabilitate himself quickly.

Hanrahan is still running—at least, his name will stay on the ballot. For the first few days after his dumping, the rumor mill at the Criminal Courts (where Hanrahan's offices are located) insisted he's still really Mayor Daley's choice. Come March, the precinct captains will get their instructions as to how their people should vote—so the gossip ran—and the word will be, Hanrahan. Well, this talk simply reflected the radically suspicious nature of the people who've willingly stayed on at the prosecutor's office for three years of Hanrahan. Currently, his campaign is barely staffed. It seeks publicity, but does little organizationally.

The third Democratic candidate is Donald Page Moore, 43. He spent several years as a special prosecutor for Robert Kennedy's Department, helping to put together cases against Jimmy Hoffa and Bobby Baker. He has also campaigned against capital punishment. He seeks the support of blacks, liberals, and independents, but also hopes to cut into moderate votes, as well. The Chicago *Tribune* likes him. And he takes a sensible approach to street crime: it exists, it hurts blacks more than whites, and it must be stopped—but legally. He also pledges to look into Organization finances, as well as some of the agencies it controls—particularly the Cook County tax assessor's office and the Chicago Buildings Department. He comes across as experienced and responsible, but tough.

Consequently, the primary will provide a law-and-order referendum inside Mayor Daley's own party. At least three different kinds of law enforcement will be on the ballot: Hanrahan's shoot-to-kill offensive, Berg's easygoing but politically-limited tack, and Moore's approach of putting the law where it's needed, not where it's merely expedient.

The Democrat faces an impressive Republican this November, Bernard Carey, 36. He was the 1970 G.O.P. candidate for Cook County sheriff. He led the Republican ticket here. Still, he fell 10,000 votes behind the Democrat, Richard Elrod. A recount of one quarter of the county's precincts cut Elrod's margin back to 7,000 votes. Finishing the recount would have cost $200,000, but Carey didn't have it. He's now chief of the special prosecutions unit of the Illinois attorney general's office. Needless to say, he's delighted to take out his knife again for the Organization. And this time he expects to have enough money.

Carey's background includes a five-year stint as an F.B.I. agent. He stresses this, but shrewdly. "The bureau's overall record is an excellent one," he says. Then, for an example, he cites the F.B.I.'s long-standing practice of warning suspects of their rights. "We did this long before the *Miranda* ruling made it mandatory, simply because we wanted to be fair to people," he explains. An adviser points to another subtle shift by Carey:

"In the '70 campaign, if someone asked him one of those questions like, 'Who do you think is the greatest living American,' Bernie would always say, 'J. Edgar Hoover.' This year, though, we expect he'll shrug and smile and say, something like, 'Oh, I don't know—how 'bout Leo Durocher?' "

RALPH WHITEHEAD, JR.

(Ralph Whitehead, Jr., a previous contributor, is a Chicago newspaperman.)

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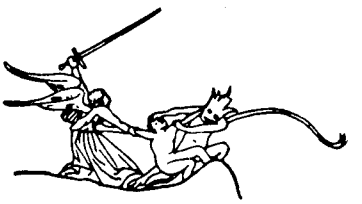
CREATING A CHRISTIAN IDENTITY

JOHN C. MEAGHER



Is there any point in trying to be faithful to a Christianity that is both shaky in its public credit and removed from where the action is?

IT WOULD HAVE served Elijah right if the Lord had declined to play his grandstanding game with the priests of Baal. He would have been furious. But he wouldn't have been converted to the opposition. And since the Israelite identity crisis would still have remained unresolved, he would have been driven, like all of us who are deprived of timely fire from heaven, to theologize.

"I think there's a theological task that has to be done," a campus minister remarked earlier this year, in the course of a discussion on the crisis of faith. "It has to do with vision, it has to do with claims the numinous makes on us. We talk about those claims in a variety of ways, and for Christians, the numinous, the claim of the numinous, somehow is related to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and the Spirit of God. Now what I understand to be the theological task is trying to make concrete the promise of God in relationship to vision, particularly in terms of the cultural movements that are taking place today and the ones that we happen to be involved in. I'm talking particularly about the 'movement' from my involvement."

In the idiom of the Movement—right on! But although this is a representative description of a central concern in the problem of Christian identity, it is still more intriguing as a representative *embodiment* of the problem. In the first place, note that the ultimate religious form to which the speaker appeals is not specifically Christian, but rather, interreligious: we can speak of the numinous in a variety of ways, the Christian way being only one of them. In the second place, note the gingerly and hesitant manner in which the speaker expresses the encoding of numinous vision into Christian terms: for Christians, the numinous *somehow is related* to Jesus and to the Spirit of God. Not that it is the effulgence of Jesus and the Spirit, or that it is the ultimate meaning of Jesus and the Spirit, or even that it is authentically manifested in Jesus and the Spirit—merely that it is somehow related. In the third place, the necessary theological task is said to be the specification of religious vision "in terms of" current cultural changes, a translation of Numinous Promise into the idiom of the Movement. But in the speaker's emphasis on the importance of grasping more clearly the relationship between numen and seething world, he shows little confidence that it could be much to the point to detour the connection via Christianity. Indeed, if the foundational elements of Christianity are only "somehow related" to the numinous, must one not suspect it would be equally effective and more efficient to make the connection more directly? And thus the traditional determinants of Christian identity drift toward the margin, while the center is taken up with the convergence of generalized religion and particularized cultural involvement.

This is new territory. Most of Christian tradition, lived out in parochial isolation from serious competitors, has taken for granted that the faith was thoroughly numinous and utterly co-extensive with authentic religious life. To speak of the numinous apart from Christianity was to risk being either silly or impious.

JOHN C. MEAGHER *is a member of the faculty at St. Michael's College, University of Toronto. This article is adapted from* Christian Identity on Campus, *edited by Myron B. Bloy, Jr., published by the Seabury Press in collaboration with the Church Society for College Work. Similar themes are developed in a forthcoming book by Mr. Meagher,* The Gathering of the Ungifted, *which will be published by Herder and Herder.*

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Protected with a heavy cultural overlay, this notion of its own ultimacy and completeness defined Christian identity for centuries. But no more. Largely through its attempts at sympathetic encounter with other world religions, Christianity has learned clearly that it is one of several on a generally similar quest. We have accordingly learned how to describe, and to some extent even how to experience, the character of an underlying *homo religiosus* whose form is not specifically Christian.

But this phenomenon has been around long enough for us to get used to it. We have known for quite some time that underneath one's Christian understanding lies a more ultimate religious disposition that can be described in general religious idioms in which Christianity participates but which are not in themselves derived from Christianity. The numinous is only one of these more general forms. One may also speak of righteousness; of salvation; of enlightenment; of peace; of purity; of communion; of beatitude. These are movements of spirit that are deeper in us than the Christian gospel. Perforce: for how else would we be able to recognize it as good news? It is ultimately at the level described by these categories that we experience and evaluate religious reality, though the experience itself may have to be of concrete particulars. And therefore the discovery that once may have seemed unsettling turns out to be a part of the good news itself: for the congruity of Christianity with the native religious dispositions of man is the indispensable condition for its capacity to bless and perfect our humanity, one of the marks of its authenticity and one of the sources of its power. The same may also be said of other religions, which naturally share Christianity's tendency to develop toward teh fulfillment of *homo religiosus*. At this level of inquiry, the claims of competing religions cannot be settled; there is no technique for surveying their peculiarities and differences from one another that can demonstrate the conclusive humanistic superiority of one religion's endowments. Christianity does not monopolize good news, and does not have exclusive access to the depths of *homo religiosus*. It would be unreasonable to require or expect otherwise. For the authentication of Christian identity at that level—which is not the only one, and not necessarily the most important—it is quite enough if the ultimate religious forms find their satisfaction and adequate expression in the stuff of Christianity. That the two strata are not absolutely indistinguishable does not matter.

Or rather, *need* not matter. It still often does, for it has been discouraging for the Christian tradition to awaken from its dream of a definitive apologetics into the harsher light of modern times. The phrase "somehow related to" is a characteristic symptom of a general modern unsettlement of Christian identity, reflecting a loss of confidence both in the credibility of Christianity and its adequacy as a vehicle of the ideal development of humanity.

Sobered by the discoveries of biblical scholarship, chastened by the criticism of analytical philosophy, bruised by physical science, social science and comparative religion, disappointed by the behavior of the churches, and humbled by the disaffection and hostility of a largely post-Christian environment, the up-to-date Christian might understandably express his faith in terms that are cautious and apologetically vague. Even more so the most engaged and active of modern Christians, for the movements in which they are involved often bring them into collision with the churches and into collusion with their avowed enemies. To engage in these movements deeply and faithfully entails the development of one's religiously foundational self-understanding, one's sense of the numinous or of righteousness or whatever, in terms of experiences whose coherence with the preoccupations of Christian tradition are sometimes a bit obscure. Hence the urgency felt about translating the Christian promise into the terms of such experience, to make Christianity belong more clearly to the convergence of reverence and revolution, where a new religion sometimes seems to be arising.

And thus also, in the meantime, the nagging doubts: Is there any point in trying to be faithful to a Christianity that is both shaky in its public credit and removed from where the action is? Beyond these misgivings, the formal ministers of Christianity must add a still more awkward dilemma: Under such impossible circumstances, can it be either honest or credible (let alone both!) to come on as an Official Christian? The reality of Christian identity in its most vividly and honorably contemporary form stands precariously and confusedly between two worlds, one evidently expiring and the other not yet quite born, apparently burdened with the task of being faithful to two masters—and having it on the best possible authority what *that* leads to.

THERE ARE several ways of dealing with this identity crisis. One may ignore it by burrowing snugly into some otherworldly version of earlier Christian identity and let the rest of the world go by: the Spiritual Retreat. Or one may acknowledge the changing times just enough to appropriate from socio-political reform movements materials for the ornamentation of an otherwise unadjusted stance: new patches on old garments. On the other hand, one may give over the primary allegiance to the other master. On that side of the boundary lie the Post-Christian Leap, a frankly secularized stance which incorporates only as much of the old faith as has sunk through cultural fallout into our

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The proper way of demythologizing belief is to recognize that the hope of 'becoming' is an authentic and characteristic Christian disposition.

bones, and the Christianity of As It Were, which like the former is based on a thought- and language-system of a basically secularist character, but which adds a seasoning of remembered Christian symbols (though it is not always clear whether this is natural or artificial flavoring).

Each of these ways actually has its own integrity as a manner of dealing with the identity crisis, enough so that each deserves a hearing during the quasi-political process by which Christian theology must sort itself out. But alone, none of them will quite do as a way of defining Christian identity in our time.

The first two, Spiritual Retreat and New Patches, make the ancient and discouragingly persistent mistake of presuming that Christian identity has already been thoroughly defined, and that the abiding Spirit has nothing of importance to teach through the news of our time—an assumption which, besides being intrinsically implausible, is hardly the lesson to be derived by studying the behavioral history of the church. We know it is not so, by the same means by which we respond to the gospel: in the deepest reaches of our reverence, we know good news when we hear it and can recognize the taste of good fruit. As we watch and hear and touch the new ways of our time, we know that our Christianity is being taught truths which should belong to it, as well as being reminded of others about which it has been negligent, even if the teaching is under auspices that are far from being explicitly Christian. But not much polemic needs to be spent on reaction against the challengingly new: such a stance is so generally uncongenial to the liberal Christian temperament that it appears to be virtually self-invalidating.

The second pair have a much stronger hold on Christian thought, however, and need a bit more attending to. They are attractive in their honesty, responding as they do to various degrees of crisis experienced along the axis of belief; and they are attractive in their modernity, since they are equally responsive to the urgency with which the best instincts of our time regard the axis of relevance. The current crisis of Christian identity is essentially a crisis of belief and crisis of relevance, and it is on those terms that it must be dealt with.

Difficulties have been arising along the axis of belief for a long time. Not for generations has the Christian world been entirely confident of the truth of traditional Christian identity, formed in the image of Christ the living and coming Lord. The symptoms of disintegration were quiet at first, confined largely to the intricate special interpretations and mental reservations with which Christians addressed themselves to the content of the church's belief, and a tendency to proclaim only the more modest promises of the gospel. Then came a more direct critical attack, from within the church, on those portions of traditional belief that were most difficult to reconcile with twentieth-century knowledge and habits of mind. Having found some elements too dependent on discredited prescientific modes of thought (e.g., heaven-in-the-sky, hell-down-below), and others too strongly in league with assumptions that modern intelligence is reluctant to share (e.g., those surrounding the miraculous and the demonic), some of the most able thinkers of the church set about the task of demythologizing. But what began as an attempt to purge Christianity of false mythical elements tended finally to become a radical reinterpretation. Having properly condemned beliefs that were no longer fit for human habitation, the demythologizing movement went on to condemn others that merely fell below a certain standard of skeptical intellectual comfort. Christians were accordingly encouraged to surrender their notions of the divinity of Jesus, his physical resurrection, the Kingdom to come. Now, in the wake of this movement, comes a vast softening of conviction in such things, manifested by a more public and general symptom: a form of religious discourse and religious practice detached from Christian particulars and concretely defined in ways that all modern minds might accept—only "somehow related" to the traditional doctrinal and liturgical foundations of Christianity.

It is not difficult to understand how modern sensibilities might find themselves more at ease with this Christianity of As It Were. It solves the tension of belief. An identity thus formed wears more comfortably, fits closer to the skin. There is something obviously right about its honesty, and something apparently efficient in the directness of its appeal to the general forms of *homo religiosus*. These criteria have their own limitations, of course: honest and comfortable religion (as critics of the church know well) can be deceptive and can relax the very tensions on which significant growth depends—and it is still not clear that the direct formation of *homo religiosus* through generalized religion is necessarily more effective than raising *homo sapiens* with symbolic logic as his mother tongue. But the real point of objection lies elsewhere: it is that nothing so unnecessarily discontinuous with the Christian past can provide an adequate solution

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to the problem of *Christian* identity. There are indeed new forms of religious integrity available on the other side of the Post-Christian Leap, but it is not appropriate to call them unqualifiedly Christian.

If circumstances require Christian identity to serve two masters in order to be faithful, there is still one other way offered by our time, standing between the two pairs discussed above and far less likely to self-destruct as an identity that is both contemporary and Christian. This is the Christianity of At Least: an attempt to negotiate an honorable compromise by discerning in the self-understanding of modern consciousness structures of meaning that are genuinely cognate (though not identical) with the contents of traditional Christian belief—locating Christian identity in the terrain in which the claims of both masters overlap. This form of demythologizing, not nearly as radical as the other, is attractive enough to have won wide acceptance as a way of preserving both Christianity and modernity: from it have come a fleet of new experimental creeds, scaled down to the level of general reservations and defining Christian faith in terms of those features of traditional Christianity which the contemporary Christian may *at least* believe.

Taken by itself, however, this route is not quite satisfactory. Although it attempts to be faithful to both the Christian tradition and the modern mind, it really compromises both. To propose diminished belief as the equivalent to traditional belief, even if the diminution is only partial, is to beg the question and confuse the issue. No good purpose is served by trying to pretend that the earlier Christian church did not believe what it thought it believed, nor by trying to pretend that we mean the same things if in fact we don't And we are not in a position to claim confidently that it does not matter: it has always mattered in the past and has left an impress on the Christian tradition which no one seeking Christian identity can decisively discredit or properly ignore. So where can we go from here?

THE BASIC THRUST of these attempted solutions seems to me quite right. Some form of demythologizing is unavoidable, especially for the Christianity that cohabits with liberal intelligence, where the tension of belief is most acute. But what is wrong with these attempts is that they mislocate the myth. They strike at the *content* of Christian belief, when what is called for is, rather, a demythologizing *form*—that is, not *what* beliefs are held, but rather *how* they are held.

The really troublesome myth is the supposition that all Christians relate to the church's belief with a faith that brings total personal conviction. Like all myths, this has its element of truth: from the beginning, there have undoubtedly always been such believers, whose wholeness of faith would not have left room for the least knife-edge of irony or doubt. They were, and remain, the paradigmatic cases of Christian faith. But they are paradigmatic in the sense that they represent the ideal limit: that is the condition of faith to which the Christian is called to aspire. Its relationship to Christian identity is not that it defines what a Christian claims to *be*, but rather what he may *become*. The proper way of demythologizing belief is to recognize that the hope of becoming is an authentic and characteristic Christian disposition.

The problem of sin taught the church at an early stage the difference between what the Christian claims to be and what he hopes to become. But with respect to the question of belief, a combination of ecclesiastical discipline and strong cultural complicity has obscured the same distinction, fostering a myth of faith which has endured remarkably long—but with which the church can no longer live. A hope that is strong, unchallenged, and firmly supported by one's community may easily be mistaken for full belief: and so it was in the case of the ordinary Christian in earlier times. It is not hard to see how the myth persisted. But in the world in which the church now lives, the previously obscured distinction is forced upon us. It is therefore not a question of a loss of faith, but merely a more accurate relocation of its boundaries now that cultural circumstances require us to take greater intellectual responsibility for the sources and degrees of our conviction. To join oneself in hope and love to the belief of the Christian church is, and has always been, to participate authentically in Christian faith.

In the inner wellsprings of religious life, one begins with the hope of religious fulfillment and the love of its Bestower. If one finds in Christianity a fruitful ground for the nourishment and development of this hope and love, one has already made an implicit act of faith by which one begins to participate in the church. If at this stage one still does not or cannot yet believe confidently everything the church proposes to him as the content of its formal faith, one may nevertheless love it enough to entertain it with reverent seriousness, and hope that an authentic faith may be fostered by sharing in Christian life. In earlier times, this was the condition of the catechumen during his preparation for entry into the church; circumstances strongly discouraged both the discovery and the admission that it is also, when belief is subjected to more rigorous scrutiny, the condition of the ordinary Christian, even if it is not that of the perfected Christian. We have since made both the discovery and the admission—along with the realization that Christian identity is not undermined by difference between the faith of the church and the faith of its members.

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The underdevelopment of the Christian heritage, and the contemporary church, is nowhere more evident than in those areas with which the best spirits of today's reformist culture are especially preoccupied.

For belief is not given fully to each member of the church. Faith is a charism, given to the church, the corporate body of the faithful, and is the objective correlative of the communal experience of belief as lived out by the church in history. This is what the Creed symbolically expresses in its enactment of the belief of the corporate body, and the first-person-singular of the Creed would accordingly be more appropriately understood as that of the church than that of the individuals who compose it. The latter may also believe individually what the Creed formulates for corporate understanding, but the church has always understood such a faith as a special gift. It is not ours for the asking, and can hardly be supposed to be definitive of authentic Christian identity. It describes the paradigmatic case, the accumulated tradition of belief toward which the Christian is invited to aspire. But in the meantime, until such aspiration is fulfilled, faith need not be complete to be authentically Christian. Through hope and love, the identity of the Christian may transcend the limits of his belief, participate in the faith of the church, and become unmythically and unpretendingly real.

SUCH A MODE of Christian identity seems to me both honest and credible. But not, for all that, complete. Faith is not all that Christianity is, and surely not all that it is supposed to be. It claims to be the Way and the Life as well as the Truth.

Here arise more collisions between Christian identity and the ethos of contemporary reforming zeal, and the problems thus raised along the axis of relevance are often even more acute than the problem of belief. The church promises, and even lays claim to, a more abundant life. Is such a claim credible when tested for vitality against the quickened pulse of modern ideals? Not obviously, it seems. In the vital center of contemporary life, one finds persistently a deep misgiving: What has the Christian heritage to do with *now*, with understanding and action in the face of the needs and urgencies of our time? What has Christianity to do with what we find ourselves and our world becoming? Neither Spiritual Retreat nor New Patches can provide an answer: these are merely ways of avoiding the most radical form of the question and retreating from the forms of life through which an answer might be achieved. Again, the stronger inclinations are toward a harsher judgment on Christianity. Surveyed from the rather impatient perspective of leading reformist movements, it looks neither especially convincing in the present nor especially promising for the future. Despite the fact that Christianity has long dreamed of peace and of radical justice and of human brotherhood, it has not shown much capacity to generate from its own private heritage the solutions now urgently needed—and has even been disappointingly sluggish in its response to the problems. Thus self-betrayed, it does not obviously merit anything better than the nostalgic concessions of As It Were or the bolder rejection of the Post-Christian Leap.

There is no dodging the accusation. Individual leaders have proved the relevance of their Christianity to the movements seeking the revitalization and humanization of the world; but in general, the underdevelopment of the Christian heritage, and of the contemporary Christian church, is nowhere more glaringly evident than in precisely those areas with which the best spirits of today's reformist culture are especially preoccupied. In the light of what they know and want, the church seems embarrassingly naïve and negligent about the character and needs of human societies and of life in this new time—so scandalously short of revolutionary cash value that if the trial of relevance is conducted brusquely and exclusively according to these perceptions, the verdict is predictable. It only remains to be decided whether the sentence imposed shall be death, life imprisonment in marginal acts of piety, or bankruptcy without discharge.

But if the trial of relevance appeals *exclusively* to these considerations, it is a rigged trial, and embodies an unreal and desperate demand—reminiscent of the late inquiry about what it means to be a Christian physicist. It is, in fact, the most up-to-date and seductive version of that form of Pharisaism which righteously condemns any movement that hobnobs too intimately with unfashionable kinds of sinners. It is to be granted that Christianity has been too preoccupied with restricted ways of being the Truth, and that it has been sadly negligent about preserving and developing its own self-understanding as Way and Life. It has a great deal to learn and to remember. But such a realization is neither scandalous nor novel. The incompleteness and insufficiency of the church are among the permanent facts of life and of history, but they are not in themselves proof of either obsolescence or senility. There is a limit to what may legitimately be asked, and another to what may reasonably

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be expected. It may be appropriate to prod the universities into greater involvement in pressing contemporary problems, but it is not helpful to pretend that it is within their competence to eliminate suffering. The church deserves a similar sanity from its disappointed critics, and a little patience.

It also deserves a less narrow standard of judgment, and a more impartial judge. If the trial is to be fair, then one must hear all the claims on both sides. It must be remembered that the question of relevance may cut two ways. It is not only a matter of what Christianity can deliver to the concerns that most preoccupy me (and when fairly examined, it discloses resources which no other source can match), but also whether I have permitted the pattern of my concerns to be sufficiently relevant to the preoccupations of Christianity. If I refuse to deal seriously with the latter kind of relevance, there is no fair and balanced way for me to come to terms with the problem of Christian identity. Nearly two thousand years of Christian experience have been lived out, all of it modern in its own day. Its value and importance should be evident to anyone who bothers to learn about it, and the basic style of Christian identity which carried and preserved that experience therefore has a claim to make. It deserves freedom from being eviscerated by the scalpel of a benevolent but undiscriminating urgency, or from being put away as a result of a mistaken diagnosis. Not that it offers a legitimate refuge from the truth of our times, or invites us to evade the task of redefinition. Christianity cannot leave the old priorities untouched, or survive exclusively on an identity which, like all identities, is partially obsolete. It must be creative in order to be faithful. But both its creativity and its fidelity are too important and holy not to be taken with the utmost seriousness. And therefore, when we anticipate with properly hopeful excitement that a new Christian identity will be forged through the response of dedicated Christians to the movements of our time, let us not, in our enthusiasm, forget that the word *forged* can carry two quite different senses.

We stand between two worlds, I remarked a while back, one not yet quite born and the other apparently expiring. How does such a world die? It dies the way a wisdom dies: by being abandoned.

Christianity was never easy, and rarely obvious. I expect that most Christians, at one time or another, have wished enviously that theirs could be the hard way of Paul, driven relentlessly by the demands of the gospel but fully possessed by it: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth." That might be easier to deal with than the way it usually is: the difficult business of opting continually to sustain the demands of a Christian identity that has not yet transfigured us. But we must start from where we are. Our Christianity has, after all, only been offered, not imposed. Much of it is probably easy enough to shake off if one wishes to do so. It has already been weakened by having been deprived of our courageous dedication to what it demands of our active lives. It can be allowed to die to us if we merely withhold from it the faith, hope and love on which its remaining power and vitality depend, reducing it to a museum of thinkable but only figurative symbols. But to suppose this inevitable is to misunderstand history; and to suppose that the authority of Christianity is obliged to make itself felt independently of our response to it is to misunderstand not only religion but the human condition. We cannot escape responsibility for the formation of the world in which we are to live and find our meaning. We are sentenced to choose. There is no way of avoiding involvement in the life or the death of Christian identity, for neither can take place except through the ways in which we constitute our lives, with it or against it. What can guide our choice?

For an answer, we must return to precisely those canons of judgment by which the crisis of Christian identity was made acute in the first place: belief and relevance. And the inescapable truth is that when I survey what I really believe, I find that it goes beyond the boundaries of generalized religion. It includes not only the authenticity of Jesus as a manifestation of the holy truth, and the congruence of his gospel with what I would ultimately wish to become, but also the revealing importance of the Christian experience as history reports it, the rightness of what the Christian body in its best and most lucid moments has tried to be and to give to the world, the way in which the church's demanding good news about Christ, the living and coming Lord, echoes in me like a judgment and a calling home.

These things do not come to me as the bones of a dead and dying world: they are living data of my present experience for which I must take responsibility. As a way of being faithful to their reality, I choose not to withhold my trust in those whose experience of them is more intimate than mine, or the hope and love which they invite for the Christian claims and

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promises which my faith can not yet reach. And so also with relevance: not only does my Christian identity deliver to me something valuable in myself, something I have never found a way to receive at any other hands, but when I listen reverently to the testimony of the traditionally Christian modes of consciousness, I find in them a peculiar ability to affirm and encourage what I recognize as life, to perceive the holiness of the new passion for peace and justice and to be at home in it, to value what our time has newly discovered and yet to transcend the provinciality and self-deception of this and of all present moments. I find a perspective that I experience as both fruitful and wise. If these are not important dimensions of relevance, then I cannot think how the term is to be used.

The world of traditional Christianity has not yet expired, and our understanding of Christian identity should continue to sustain its claims and to participate in its demands—for it is not that Christianity has failed, but merely that it has been found too difficult to master. To acknowledge the rights and virtues of its enduring invitation is no impediment to participation in the birth of a new world, and may be a valuable protection against the danger of miscarriage. It would be rather glib and starry-eyed to deny, for instance, that the new reformers' courage and energy have sometimes been turned to brutal uses, or that the new mood would be more promising if it participated more in the discipline of a tradition more wise and experienced—and for all that, no less generous—than itself. Not all that is hatched by zeal is holy, and in the occasional friction between Christian principles and social revolutionaries, it is not always the former that needs shaping up. Neither one nor the other alone, then: for although no man can serve two incompatible masters, we are all required to honor both father and mother.

IF CHRISTIANITY is to stay alive, however, it is not enough for it to protect its tradition. It must develop new tradition, which it will do in living new life. Here again, the liberalized and activist Christianity—and above all, I believe, the type now breeding on university campuses—will be especially important, particularly in the mode which I have described before as the Christianity of At Least.

I suggested earlier that the Christianity of At Least is, when taken by itself, not a satisfactory solution to the problem of modern Christian identity. But the alternative solution which I have tried to outline does not totally exclude At Least: on the contrary, this not only permits it to be validly included within the life of the church, but virtually requires it. For although the church itself continues to propose the received paradigm, the condition to which it is hoped that the Christian will attain, we need also to understand Christian identity as lived. Within its horizons are varieties of degrees and ways in which faith has turned to bone and spirit in the lives of aspiring Christians. Their Christian identity is defined ultimately and hopefully in terms of the belief and life of the church; but it is also defined currently and substantially by what they have thus far come to believe and to live. It is in this way that the compromise embodied in the Christianity of At Least becomes an honorable one: it expresses helpfully and honestly the living (if incomplete) faith of the Christian without confusing it with the ultimate (if unfinished) faith of the church.

But if the church listens well to this testimony, it will discover than something new has been added. From her traditional perspective, this is the Christianity of At Least, insofar as it has partially realized the church's own ideal; it is not the whole of Christian identity. But if the perspective is enlarged to include the growth endemic to living things, this becomes the Christianity of Also: if it does not incorporate and incarnate all that the church holds dear, it nevertheless absorbs and offers to the life of the church new possibilities, new priorities, new styles of dedicated life. The Christian identity of Also is both less and more than traditional Christian identity, and is the indispensable way of growth for the living church. It is in precisely this mode of Christian self-consciousness that the church experiments and learns—appropriates into its own life discoveries made elsewhere, so that their spirits may be tested and discerned.

This is not a cozy process. The church has always comprised elements of undiscriminating faddishness, too ready to reroute the life of the church down some ephemeral dead end, and elements of undiscriminating reaction, too starkly inhospitable to news to bother coming to terms with it even when it is clearly good. But harmony, as the ancients contended, is a function of discord. There is bound to be a lot of the latter as the church undertakes its current homework, and it must accordingly increase its tolerance, trusting that the truth will prevail—not by fiat or by fad, but by being lived. And of all the life of the church, the segment that is most importantly relevant to this process right now is probably the Christianity of the Movement—the peace effort, the demand for social justice, the global revaluation of what we have made of life—where the new news is being most vividly and demandingly proclaimed. It is especially through the living out of the identity of the Christian of those worlds that we shall eventually discover what of it belongs to Christ.

And it is likewise only through such a process that the church can know who and what is the Christ in whom it believes. For at the root of the church's life

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lies the conviction that itself, the Christian body, is the continued manifestation in history of the Lord whose office, meaning and nature are disclosed in the development of the life and belief of the church. At the point of its origin stands the Jesus of Faith, in whose authenticity every Christian, no matter how small his endowment of faith, may readily believe. This is the Jesus of Faith whom Cleopas acknowledged as a man, a prophet, mighty in work and in word before God and all the people—the one who was publicly manifest and whose credibility was, and is, sufficiently evident through the mere Jonah-sign of his message and his deeds. The Jesus of Faith is the first principle of Christianity. It is in the Jesus of Faith that the Church discovered the second principle, the Christ of History, the Lord who guides his people as himself, shaping their life and their understanding as long as history shall endure.

The church is forever engaged in the process of understanding the Christ of History through its life as Christ in History, going about his Father's business. Precisely how the church's encounter with the new world of reforming movements will affect its understanding of itself and the Christ of History remains to be seen. We can know only that such heady new wine is bound to stretch and reform the old skins. That is the way it has always worked. We cannot yet predict what more of the church's belief will eventually go the way of the apostolic expectation of a first-generation Parousia, nor what may be added through the new spirits, as the church once learned to repent of her toleration of slavery. Our task is simply to go about this business faithfully, with as much mutual trust as we can summon.

Such faithfulness does not require us to repudiate the past in order to participate in the formation of the future, or to suppose that the authenticity of new Christian forms depends upon identifying "the *real* Christianity" with what is palatable to radical secularism, or what is immediately negotiable in action, or even with our own brands of the Christianity of Also. To be faithful must mean both to preserve and to create. In both, one must be generous, and careful, and daring, because there is no trick of theological engineering that can protect our choices from cowardice masquerading as prudence, or from recklessness disguised as Vision. Or even from the Movement disguised as Christianity. There will be time for new harmonies to arise out of new discords, as long as we remember that nothing less than the reverent appropriation of Christianity's whole experience, past and present, can provide a sufficient basis for the discernment of spirits.

So when we are told that "He is in the desert" and "He is in the secret chambers," or "He is in the Scriptures" and "He is in the Old Way," we are to believe in the finality of none of these: but we are to attend seriously to all of them, and to those who live them, because this is the way in which Christianity searches for its ultimate identity. What that identity will ultimately be, as belief, or as worship, or as style of life, we cannot know. What her members can no longer hope, the church can no longer believe; and what her members come to be, the church will absorb into her life and understanding. But as long as men can continue to believe in the Jesus of Faith, Christianity will endure; and as long as they continue to love and hope in the Christ of History, At Least is not the last word in the definition of Christian identity; and as long as the church can trust in the guidance of the Christ of History, it must acknowledge the validity of the Christianity of Also as a part of the Way, the Truth and the Life through which it is led by and toward its hidden Lord. In the meantime, the Christianity of our new worlds must continue, like the Body of Christ everywhere, to be about its Father's business: no good work need be compromised, no faithful witness need be restrained, and no man need be ashamed of the gospel of Christ.

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JOHN FANDEL

COME HOLY GHOST

After curry and sweets and parlor talk,
We drifted to ghosts from very walk
Of hearsay and the actually heard or seen,
The midnight knockings, bells between
The strikings, the evening voice
In the empty study—take your choice . . .
The antiseptic fingers tapping the spine,
Was it the wind around the eaves, the wine?
Say what you will, I shared the *frisson,* too.
Cold stars over the roof burned through
The All Souls' night until a spark
From the ashing pine was meteors. Dark
Settled to silence; the sacred ghosts
Were laid. By what deference to Hosts
Then did I turn to ponder Holy
Spirit, once the Ghost the Bishop slapped solely
Into me, the sweet knocking of sense into
The house of breath—no longer a haunted house?
After a gooseflesh, prayer, true sound to rouse
A real revenant in the temple of Him,
Chimes and the reverence of Seraphim.
To what Nassau of Nirvana have You flown?
The world is overgrown
With Your absence.
Slapped Spirit, come back. Presence
Makes the heart less fond? O true
Delver, Deliverer, our dalliance needs You.

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THE STAGE

Jesus has never really made it on the stage, for a number of good reasons, and despite the large quantity of gospel stories and masses that have been danced or dramatized recently, I have to report there is no real change in the old pattern. The Jesus revival has provided some funny gags and some good tunes, but I think even these don't measure up to what we are hearing on the radio all the time these days. Of course, no theater songs at all are measuring up to what we hear on the radio these days, and it is significant that the new interest in religion has created a kind of hysteria on Broadway while it has been taken in stride by pop music as just more good grist for the mill. Today's big hit, "American Pie," for example, is neither shy nor heavy-handed in its use of religious images, and a song called "My Sweet Lord" by George Harrison, the ex-Beatle, combines hand-clapping revival music with the happy intensity of an Indian chant, the refrain shifting gradually from "Alleluia" to "Hare Krishna" and the whole thing ringing with an authentic, guitar-jangling, slide-whistling spirit which the new church hymnologists have probably had somewhere way at the back of their minds and which I think Vivaldi might recognize.

The reason recording artists are showing more creativity about Jesus than the writers of stage musicals is not just a matter of where the talent is, but also of what works in what medium. We don't need to know how George Harrison would tell the story of Jesus or Krishna, nor look for the unwinding of any theological theories in the four and a half minutes that "My Sweet Lord" lasts, in order to be moved by it. It is the spirit that counts.

Plain spirit in the popular arts can last just about four and a half minutes, and after that it has to start explaining itself. In drama particularly, we expect the issue to be defined in human terms as soon as possible. Even at a musical we are impatient to get through the overture and the big opening number in order to find out *what's going on*. The same is true of plays and musicals about Jesus, except that there is an extra problem—how can a transcendental event be translated into human drama?

Godspell, the off-Broadway success which is based on St. Matthew's gospel, ignores the question for as long as possible and manages to keep going for almost an entire act on talent, goodwill and sweetness of heart alone. The musical numbers are often exhilarating because they borrow deftly from good styles over the ages, disarming us because they so lovingly share what they have lifted. It is the sharing that makes the evening, upstaging even the talented performers, as the audience is encouraged to clap, sing, and drink wine with the cast during the intermission. We are only occasionally reminded, in the midst of all the fun and the good rock, that *Jesus* is what we're talking about, and then suddenly this fact all by itself has the effect of melting an audience, releasing a flow of peace, love, and even tears. It is moving, particularly to the young people who fill the house, to think that everyone in the room might love each other for just that moment, that Jesus wants us to laugh, sing and dance, that the things we really enjoy, like a good song, are okay with Him.

So Jesus makes this show work, so to speak, and we would like not to bother about holes in the script. But they are hard to avoid. Act I consists of re-enactments of parables and episodes in the gospel, all done in the styles of familiar entertainers—W. C. Fields, Jonathan Winters, Mae West, Leonard Cohen, the Rockettes, etc.—but many are so relentlessly joyful that we lose the context entirely. More important, in Act II, after spirit alone has been exhausted, the show reaches for drama and instead gets mired in plot—the passion and crucifixion of Christ, very rough material for a musical. The mood of peace and love, which has been admittedly sentimental from the beginning, sinks desperately into the stickiness which is traditional in the second act of American musicals. The lights turn blue, the usual indication that this is the deep part, and after many portentous chords, this nice tap dancer whom we have called Jesus is crucified. Now the phrase "crucified tap dancer" is very theatrical (a great title for something) but it does not in itself tell a human story—who was this man and why did this happen? These questions don't even come up here, and if we had never heard of Jesus I think we would be baffled by the whole thing.

The portentous chords in this show are as sweet tinkles compared to the pretentious brass of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Here the authors have plunged directly into the story and churned up historical and metaphysical interpretations of the events, but it all has as much happiness and life as one of the plastic, hanging mastodonic bones which are in this show and which seem to float from one Tom O'Horgan production to another.

From one point of view, this is the story of a pale and petulant long-haired kid who feels that nobody understands him. He knows he is special, set apart from the rest of the world, but he finds that people don't see his real specialness. Oh sure, they crowd around and hang on him, so much that he has to keep saying. "Don't touch me and bother me all the time!" He does allow himself to be comforted at times and occasionally he accepts adulation with a smile, but mainly he keeps dreaming that people will see, by magic, how wonderful he is, as if he were floating over everybody's head with a silver robe on or sitting on a big plastic bone. Well, they will be sorry when he's gone.

It is not surprising that this adolescent dream is at-

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Toward Renewal

Gerard S. Sloyan:
(March 26, 1971, *Commonweal*)
"The most needed diaconal office would seem to resemble that of the ward leader, without profit motive for the incumbent but with pork-barrel aspect. . . . No one can favor the creation of rice-Christians. All should favor identification of a gospel of justice and peace with the works of justice and peace. Karl Marx held that the difference between Communism and all previous religions, philosophies and ideologies was its *praxis*. They talked; it did something. We Christian believers say we have in Jesus . . . a teacher who told us to *do* something. . . ."

John T. Pawlikowski:
(January 21, 1972 issue)
"A re-emergence in the contemporary church of the New Testament approach to ordained ministry would seem to lead to some or all of the following conclusions: 1) The principal ordination rite in the church would be one in which the church would accept and publicly acknowledge the commitment of men and women to a lifelong proclamation of the gospel and to the embodiment of that word in the lives of their fellow human beings and into the structures of society through concrete acts of justice and mercy. . . ."

James R. Kelly:
(December 3, 1971 issue)
"Membership [in the Catholic church] no longer means the conferral of a static spiritual identity but an invitation to participate in a changing tradition, one marked by an increasing openness to other spiritual traditions, a sense of creative doubt toward many of her present embodiments, and a heightened realization that she will be judged by others not so much by what she professes but by her ability to inspire her membership to labor creatively for a future more in accord with the ideals she shares with other traditions. . . ."

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tractive to many adolescents and has sold many records. It is perhaps curious that it purports to be the story of Jesus, but then the image of Jesus has always shifted, depending on the culture—a black Jesus for blacks, white for whites, oriental for orientals. Why not a teen-age Jesus for teen-agers?

But this notion has been twisted out of existence by the fact that Tom O'Horgan has directed the play as a piece of middle-aged camp, stuck in a pop-chic framework that might have served for an old Truman Capote costume party and which must be very puzzling to the kids in the audience: the music is stylish but bloodless, the bizarre props look like decor for a Fifth Avenue shop window, and the evening is full of in-jokes and in-numbers, most notably King Herod's high-heeled, drag-queen soft shoe, taunting Jesus to "walk across my swimming pool." It is all about money, fame, and Hollywood.

This is the real world of a "superstar" (there is a dispute over whether this word was coined by Capote, Andy Warhol or Rex Reed, which is a clue to something). A superstar is cursed by fame and adulation and surrounded by an evil world; he is pure of heart but misunderstood and victimized; cf. Marilyn, Judy Garland, Bob Dylan. We have here, then, the story of how fame can lead to crucifixion, or Jesus as James Dean.

Clearly this advanced and decadent adolescence is not so different from the real thing, except that self-pity and self-glamorization are less attractive the older one gets. In any case, the story of *Superstar* is only vaguely connected to any real Jesus we might have heard about and, what is more serious in terms of drama, the main character has been drained of personality, the better to fit into this unreal world. A superstar, after all, is by definition removed and unknown, so that the fans' dreams will not crash into facts. This washed-out, teen-age Jesus physically resembles the anemic Jesus on holy cards, and he has as much reality.

Unlike *Godspell*, *Superstar* cannot get by on high spirits and goodwill because it is, in its heart, depressing and selfish. Its tap dances have no joy. It is full of manic energy and it is seldom boring, but there is something ugly about it. Perhaps this is because it has attempted to exploit everything it has touched—religion, opera, rock music, kids, blacks, etc.

This obsession comes a cropper in a surprising place: Judas refuses to be exploited. This character has dignity and fascination because he has humanity—recognizable appetites, doubts and torments. He is played by a black actor (Samuel E. Wright when I saw it) and the performance is superb. Further, the black skin, at this point in history, intensifies our feeling for his humanity. Next to him, Jesus pales almost to invisibility.

At one point, to take a small example of the difference between drama and show-off theatrics, Jesus directs a look toward Judas which is meant to stagger him with

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its insight and power. In performance, this look is only a pouty frown, but Judas obediently falls to the ground, as per script. Later on, as Judas' universe crumbles, he looks at the man who has become, in some way, his tormentor. This gaze staggers *us*, the audience, cutting through all the poses and gimmicks, because it comes from a man, his eyes full of desperation, fear, hatred probably. This is what the theater is about. As I recall, the fellow in the white gown across the stage didn't even notice.

MICHAEL MURRAY

BOOKS

Gothic fiction and the losing battle to contain oneself

Wonderland

JOYCE CAROL OATES

Vanguard, $7.95

JAN B. GORDON

> A woman in the act of love
> feels no joy only terror, a parody
> of labor, giving birth. Torture.
> Joyce Carol Oates from
> "Unmailed Unwritten Letters"

Joyce Carol Oates' landscape has always been featured by corrupted sacred spaces in the throes of some act of self-purification. Carried *With Shuddering Fall, Upon the Sweeping Flood,* thence *By the North Gate,* her loyal readers have now been banished forever from that mythical enclosure, *A Garden of Earthly Delights* and plunged into a kingdom of award-winning anonymity whose people were simply known as *them.* Whereas the First Couple realized the nature of their transgression soon enough, this cluster of exiles can commit only *Anonymous Sins* (the title of one of her two volumes of poetry). Her readers, then, are not unlike the characters of *Wonderland* who can only regressively dream of their Origins in the reasonable facsimile of shared Fictions. All of this is to suggest that Miss Oates' canon is a cosmology of our lapse which is manifested in this latest of her novels as an irrecoverable severance between man's identity and his role. Every effort to establish a meaningful history instead only results in yet another history to such an extent that her characters often spend their lives alternating between intensive readings in local history and the reconstruction of a fictional autobiography. We derive our sense of self only self-consciously insofar as we become characters in someone else's story. The readers of one of Miss Oates' recent short stories could have easily overlooked her contribution to the periodical where it initially appeared, for it consisted only of a single page entitled "Notes About Contributors." There followed an alphabetized, bold-faced typed list of names containing a paragraph of biographical information about each "author." Her short story was nothing more than selected fragments of self-advertisement from various people's lives, and their lives were conversely created by her fiction. Each of us is a prisoner striving to escape the other's attempt to reduce "us" to "them."

If the Victorian novel approached the loss of history through the metaphor of the orphan who, in his disconnected quest for Origins, wanders through the novels of Dickens and Meredith, Joyce Carol Oates' emblem is adopted children and their foster parents. Jesse Vogel, né Harte, is first discovered by a Lockport, New York physician in the fiction of a newspaper headline. The young boy has escaped the destruction of his entire family in a murder-suicide pact and, without resources, is taken into the home of a Dr. Pedersen who operates a tabernacle disguised as a clinic. Jesse quickly discovers that love is never the reason for adoption, that he merely fills a gap in the strange doctor's own existence. People are merely mediators in this household; devoid of any sense of "self," the members of his family are pawns in a game of desire-guilt-rejection. A son wanders aimlessly about and the daughter, Hilda, has a photographic memory that makes her a contestant in quiz shows and scientific experiments. Pedersen is a sort of contemporary Gradgrind who transforms every evening meal into an accounting session wherein the members of his family are called upon to list their day's activities and acquisitions. These exercises are always the middle term in a dialectic that involves consumptive eating and bouts of vomiting; all the characters in *Wonderland* fight a losing battle to contain themselves! Young Jesse pursues the career that has been chosen for him and leaves western New York for medical training in Ann Arbor, falls in love with the spoiled daughter of a Distinguished Professor on the medical faculty, and renounces his adopted name, Pedersen, just prior to marriage. His foster father denies him the inheritance that had been promised. Surely, as in the Victorian novel, the will (testament) is related to personal Will insofar as the former is the symbol of the father's vicarious participation in the lives of his children. Financial inheritance becomes the substitute for the disappearance of any confidence in biological inheritance. *Wonderland,* then, is a novel about the problems of succession and, as in so many utopias and distopias, the concern is always for the *sequel.* Having no beginnings, these people always seem preoccupied with endings—with existing outside themselves and through some-

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one else. Dr. Vogel becomes a successful practitioner.

Jesse's future is always guided by someone else: a stepfather; a laboratory assistant in comparative anatomy; the resident surgeon; a mythical hospital director; or the fortuitous bequest of a former patient. His marriage is merely another theater, another laboratory where emotional steroids are used to make the body immune to rejection. Some of Miss Oates' best writing is contained in those passages dealing with Helene Cady, Vogel's wife. There is never any mention of love, but only of mutual dependency in their sad relationship. Parasites are the metaphors for this mystification of desire—yet another emblem of the bond between adoption, hosts, and murder-suicide pacts. The love of Vogel for his wife is always threatening because each derives his identity in part through the other. Loving is equated with a surrender of identity; the double-bind is such that the moments of heightened love are always moments of murder in *Wonderland*. Pregnancy is merely another mode of containing oneself, of exhibiting substance, of full-filling the female self. But it means that children are born into the world without parental love, so that the Jesse Vogels of the world continue to perpetuate themselves. America's history is a lineage of disconnected beings, a place where the child's question, "Am I adopted?" is more than the idle fantasy of every ten-year-old.

Wonderland belongs to the tradition of the Gothic novel in this country, but, then, maybe there is a sense in which every quest for sacred space, upon arrival, transforms the garden into a nightmare. The final one hundred pages of Miss Oates' novel consists of literal transcriptions of letters from Vogel's daughter, Shelley, to her distraught father. She has left home, joined a group of people hitching across the country (being adopted by first one person, then another), and finally settles in Toronto's Yorkville section as the angel of a drug-ridden commune. Her "trip" is a voyage toward community and her letters are filled with accounts of the beauties of the landscape coupled with blame for daddy, a pattern we have seen in even the letters of Crèvecoeur, the first to create literary epistles out of an American wonderland. Typically, Gothic fiction during the nineteenth century detailed the helplessness of some kingdom at the mercy of a monstrous being who was either without origins (Heathcliff) or the product of some scientific imagination gone astray (Frankenstein, Dracula). The hideous creature invariably turned out to be the atavistic mirror of its creator's utopian impulses with a built-in immunity mechanism that prevented the success of any of the more traditional antidotes: folk wisdom, religious faith, or blackmail. The sequel to scientific curiosity in Alice's first *Wonderland* was the topsy-turvy of *Through the Looking-Glass*, set in the winter of discontent rather than the springtime of scientific meliorism. Dr. Vogel at the conclusion of Oates' *Wonderland* attempts to re-domesticate his unwilling offspring, Shelley, whose features had been ravaged by disease and drugs. But such is the nature of the pact between the mad scientist and his double/daughter that any expression of affinity threatens the independence of the monster. The first task of the monster is to turn upon the being to whom he owes sustenance, and Miss Oates seems to be saying that our so-called generation gap resembles the distance that separates monsters from creators in Gothic fiction.

Yet, there is a veritable politics of Gothicism evident both in *Wonderland* and in that other best-selling novel of sequels, Updike's *Rabbit Redux*. Both novels attempt to explain America's hatred for the counter-culture as the failure of a Calvinistic theory of history that saw worldly success and election as identities. But that also means that those with possessions are possessed, another feature of the Gothic theodicy. The consequence is the criminal who stalks his hippie daughter's lovers in a last attempt at rescue and readoption. We can only await the *Return of Wonderland*, the resanctification of fallen spaces.

The Alienated Christian

KENNETH D. EBERHARD

Pilgrim Press, $6.95

Atheism and Alienation

PATRICK MASTERSON

U. of Notre Dame Press, $7.95

BERNARD G. MURCHLAND

Although the concept of alienation is a multi-faceted one, with various definitions and descriptions, the idea of "isolation" brings us close to its common meaning. An alienated world is one in which one part is disconnected from another, exhibiting intractable forms of fragmentation and irreducible polarities. This is a feature of whatever kind of alienation we might encounter in experience; it is always some determination of isolation or separateness. But it must be further noted that what essentially defines alienation is not isolation as such but the Humpty Dumpty plight of not being able to put the isolated parts together in any scheme of meaningful relationships. An alienated world is thus more precisely one in which reality is seen to be fundamentally contradictory, and thus quite impervious to the unifying efforts of thought and valuation.

Existentialist writers describe such a world under the rubric of absurdity. The religious-minded often posit alienation as a necessary condition of salvation or, as Kenneth Eberhard argues in his book, one of the signs of revelation. Alienation, he states, "is revelatory and offers the horizon in which the believer and the believing community are to live." And he adds: "This is the existential predicament through which God has chosen to reveal himself." It would seem to be Eberhard's position that alienation is not only a necessary but also a sufficient condition for revelation to take place. Drawing upon some contemporary analyses of alienation he distinguishes between sociological, psychological and existential alienation. He then attempts to show that all three kinds of

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alienation characterize religious experience as it is depicted in both the Old and New Testaments. The prophets, for example, had to break with their societies—sometimes literally leaving home and country but always in the sense of opposing the prevailing values. In Eberhard's account they suffered psychological alienation as well, often divided within themselves and struggling with identity problems. Fair enough. It is obvious that the Bible is full of maladjusted personalities. But since we are given to understand that existential alienation is a lack of ultimate meaning, one wonders in what sense religious experience could be "existentially" alienated. Did not the prophets in their madness find salvation? Did not the Christ snatch redemption from the abyss of rejection?

The problem here is one of finitude. Because man is finite he is aware of degrees of things: he knows there could always be more of whatever he has. He knows too that more implies most; the logical corollary of the finite is the infinite. Certain temperaments are obsessed with this distinction and feel forced to choose between the absurd (finite) on the one hand and the absolute (infinite) on the other. But to choose the absolute is not to escape the finite; it is only to exacerbate it, and this seems to be the sense in which the prophets were existentially alienated. Jesus, however, is "quite literally beyond the problem of existential alienation" because of his total self-giving. If this were the case I do not see how it would make any sense to attribute the other kinds of alienation to him, as Eberhard does. One who is beyond existential alienation is surely beyond all other kinds as well!

But perhaps this is a quibble. Eberhard's main point is that only agape can overcome alienation and since our love is always imperfect so our alienation is always with us. Here my disagreement with him is more substantial. To say that love is the "only" solution to alienation is altogether too ethnocentric and delimiting. Love may be one of the answers but by no means the only one nor, given the widespread vacuity of the word in our common parlance, would I want to consider it the most important. What I find basically objectionable in Eberhard's position is that there is no effective way in which alienation can be overcome or even diminished. Alienation is a condition of revelation. But revelation in turn intensifies our awareness of our alienated condition. And so it will until the Redeemer returneth!

Masterson's book demonstrates among other things that Eberhard's equation between alienation and religion has been thoroughly discredited by the modern mind. The development of atheism has been nourished by such ideals as human freedom and autonomy and has seen the conception of dependence upon God as a threat to the legitimate claims of subjectivity. It has accordingly rejected religious belief as a cause of human alienation. Masterson covers the well-trodden path from Descartes to Sartre and says nothing essentially new here. His exposition of the major thinkers in this period is clear and sound although rather brief. What attracted me most about his book was the final chapter in which he sketches the basis of a natural theology in an existential perspective. There is no point, he says, in trying to ground belief in alienation. It doesn't work any more. Modern man is thoroughly alienated; yet with few exceptions this does not lead to belief. Masterson suggests that we view belief as an exercise of freedom rather than a form of dependency, that we construe the claims of subjectivity as consonant with rather than incompatible with the existence of God.

How might such an approach be developed? It goes something like this. On the one hand there is convincing evidence that in its basic constitution reality is meaningless, absurd, contingent. On the other hand there is the reality that man by virtue of his distinctive self-assertive powers can transcend the sheer factuality of things and freely constitute himself and his world in terms of meaning, value, ultimacy. Getting beyond the way things are, he can posit a state of affairs that is "intrinsically worthwhile" and commit himself to such a state. To the objection that this posited world of value is as contingent and fortuitous as the factual world, that it is just as "ontologically precarious," it can be answered that the nature of freedom is such that we can live our posited values as though they were really absolute and unconditional. If it be further objected that this is the realm of make-believe, a world of as-if, one can further answer that the concrete witness to such an order through commitment and even death gives it greater authenticity than the factual order and, therefore, moral priority.

Masterson puts it this way: "We must reckon with this free affirmation, embodied in lived performance, that to fall victim to the power of contingency in defense of such values is not, despite appearances, a diminution of their reality but on the contrary an

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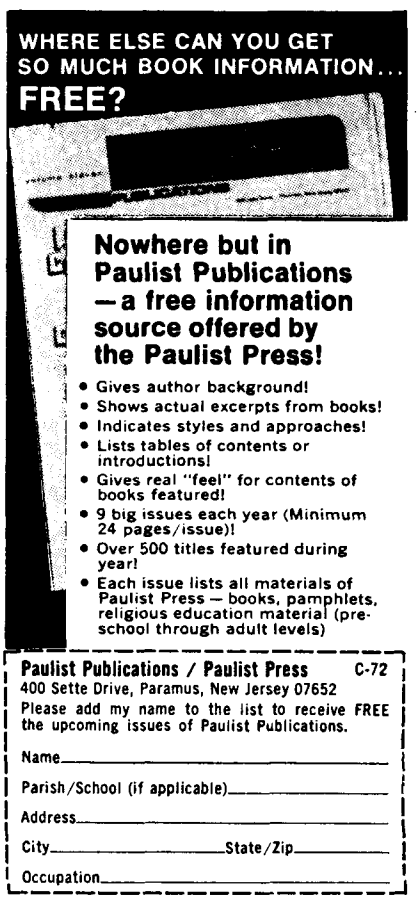
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In Memory of Padraic Colum

He wrote himself that his father was the manager of a workhouse, so he was brought up where "waifs, strays and tramps congregated." But his friend and admirer L.A.G. Strong wrote that Padraic was "not a peasant. His father was the stationmaster at Sandy Cove near Dublin." His first publication was *The Miracle of the Corn* when he was 26, and in 1910 he published *Broadsheet Ballads*. He was a young man in Dublin when James Joyce and James Stephens were there and were young, and they were all friends together. Padraic helped start the Abbey Theater and wrote plays for it, one of them the first success the Abbey had. With Padraic Pearse he also helped start *The Irish Review*, and worked in its office. He married in 1912 Mary Catherine (Molly) Maguire, who described Padraic and George Moore sitting in front of a "row of us girls" at musical affairs. She also described how a young man arrived one day with a ring to propose to her, and she refused him, so he threw the ring in the fire and left. While she was still shaken from this, Padraic Colum arrived, to find her weeping and inquire the cause. After she had explained, he fished the ring out of the grate with the tongs, set it on the hearthstone to cool so it could be mailed back to the owner, then he said, "I think that to save yourself trouble you should marry me." Molly dried her eyes, and said "All right, Colum, maybe that would be best," and declared he was a very sober young man on finding himself engaged to be married. Their friends on the whole disapproved. AE's (George Russell's) wife declared: "Colum is to marry a university girl who does not know how to boil water or wash a pocket hanky." They were married at midsummer by an old bearded priest, and on their way to stay in Wilfrid and Alice Meynells' house at Pullborough, they stopped in London to lunch in a restaurant, and met Sir Roger Casement, just back from the Congo. Molly wrote he was the handsomest, noblest-looking man she ever saw.

At Pullborough they met Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, the poet and horse-breeder, who took a great fancy to Molly. They went back to Dublin and were "at home" with tea and cakes, on Tuesdays; all the writers of the Irish Literary Renaissance were at home one afternoon a week. Most of them came to bad ends.

Lionel Johnson fell off a barstool and cracked his skull, dying of it later; John Davidson committed suicide; as did Darrell Figgis, whose wife had done so before, because of a girl friend of Darrell's who had died after an abortion; Oscar Wilde was jailed; Erskine Childers was shot by Cosgrave; Padraic Pearse and Thomas MacDonagh were executed. These two foreknew their end, telling Padraic and Molly when they left for the United States they would never see them again, since "we are going to be killed for Ireland."

Padraic Colum had an aunt in Pittsburgh, and she sent them for a wedding present tickets to come there. But they had taken a damp house in Donnybrook, and sent the tickets back. The aunt said they should come when the lease was up. Which they did, first spending the summer—of 1914—on the hill of Howth, where they helped Erskine Childers' gun-running with his yacht, which was steered by Mary Spring-Rice. At August's end they crossed to Liverpool and left for the U.S.A., third class, in a horror of a ship. They never returned to Ireland except as visitors. Padraic, at 33, had already done his best work.

He was a poet, and a teller of tales, and some of his poems, in every anthology of Irish verse, will remain.

O, to have a little house
To own the hearth and stool and all
The heaped up sods upon the fire
The pile of turf against the wall

Here is a valid statement of the territorial imperative, and it ends movingly:

Och, but I'm weary of the mist and dark
And roads where there's never a house or bush
And tired I am of bog and road
And the crying wind and the lonesome hush

His *A Boy in Eirinn* is an interesting piece of social history, though not appreciated by the young. I remember being unable to read it in the 1920's (it came out in 1913) but found I enjoyed it later, when I was grown up. His most ambitious book, *The Wild Swans*, seems to me heavy, motionless, doughy and leaden, but it had quite a success in Europe, being translated into German.

Physically, Padraic was a leprechaun of a man, small, and, when young, very dark: his wife was, I think, the better writer: her *From These Roots* is a serious critical study, and her emphasis on Lessing's importance is original and unique among English writers. But if Padraic Colum was no major poet, he had seen, not Shelley, but Yeats and Joyce and Synge plain, and he reverenced and rejoiced in the company he kept. ANNE FREMANTLE

(Anne Fremantle, author of The Three-Cornered Heart *(Viking), is the well-known anthologist and critic. Padraic Colum wrote 119 pieces for this magazine, beginning with the first issue, Nov. 12, 1924. They included 73 articles, 20 book reviews and 16 poems.)* .

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expansive disclosure that they have a more fundamental reality than have facticity, contingency and death." True, this does not necessarily lead to an affirmation of God. But if we posit the ultimately personal and moral character of reality and this is not merely arbitrary, then it suggests that it is in some important way "rational," grounded in some aspect of the nature of things. If our posited values and commitment have a validity not dependent upon our subjective affirmation of them, then a question is raised about their ground and source. If values as they are lived can be existentially vindicated then why cannot the ground of such values be similarly confirmed? Among other things, our existential response to reality points to a redefinition of rationality that could accommodate a rational basis for an affirmation of God.

Masterson deals with this possibility in a suggestive, although admittedly succinct, manner. I was reminded of the close parallel between such an existential approach and the pragmatic justification of belief. For example, James' "will to believe" is an important insight into how things are and not only how we might like them to be. The point in both cases is that belief in a fact often creates the fact. This is part of what we mean by creativity. (This, of course, is true in science as well as most other areas of human endeavor.) And creativity is the key to meaning. As I have written elsewhere, the work of dealienation is essentially the work of the imagination. The imagination is man's connective as well as his creative faculty, charged with the work of unifying and connecting up the scattered fragments of our experience. We live by our images, and the task of the imagination is to furnish us with such images as are life-giving. This is to say no more than that man must create his meanings. Meaning is not something given; nor is it something altogether discovered; it is literally something made. Masterson gives us one example of how this can be done.

Getting Back Together

ROBERT HOURIET

Coward, McCann, $7.95

PHIL TRACY

Getting Back Together is a book about communes. Not a particularly great book but an honorable failure. Its young author, Robert Houriet, spent three years traveling around the country visiting some twenty-odd American counter-culture communes. He started out in 1968, when most communes were little more than crash pads doubting they could ever work. He ended up by forming one with his wife, children and three close friends. His book is a journal of his odyssey. Therein lies his greatest error.

Houriet states in his opening chapter that he chose the journal form because it "seemed to fit." What he probably means is nothing else seemed to work. It's a common reaction of a writer faced with writing about communes and/or counter-culture. The value systems, language and social customs of people who live in communes today are so radically different from those of straight society that a good writer instinctively knows he cannot do justice to the former without bewildering the latter. So he or she adopts the journal form, hoping to transport those unfamiliar with the counter-culture on a recreation of the writer's own personal journey.

It rarely works. Unless the writer is an extremely gifted narrator, the uninitiated flounder in a backwash of cultural prejudgments and those familiar with the subject are bored by personal interjections. Again in his opening chapter, Houriet awkwardly forecasts his difficulty by stating "the essence of the communal movement transcended the lens of the objective reporter: it couldn't be confined by the old frames of socio-economic analysis." Seeking to avoid the pitfall of objective insensitivity he falls into a quagmire of personalized minutiae. All too often the going gets sticky.

One of the biggest difficulties in writing about communes is trying to set the parameters of the subject. Where the hell do you begin and end. It's like writing about marriage, no two are alike. Houriet visited most of the well known communes (the commune circuit in journalists' circles) plus several others he dug up on his own. His insights and narrative are not without merit. In fact, if you're predisposed or familiar with communes the book is at times delightfully interesting. Still one wishes he wouldn't go off in so many different directions. There is a long chapter in the book that deals with Houriet's visit to the High Ridge Farm commune and his interaction

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with the people who lived there. It reveals a sensitive forthright writer describing with admirable skill his life and the lives of the other people in the commune. In retrospect, one wishes he had stayed there.

Instead he continues on his journey piling up experiences, sensitizing himself to all the nuances of the counter-culture, lecturing on the pitfalls of hip society, drawing symbolic meanings from the day-to-day existence of ordinary freaks. When he starts drawing parallels between the momentary decisions of one commune and the whole communal movement it becomes a bit much to take. There is a whole chapter on spiritually-based communes which adds little to one's insight of communal living and nothing to one's understanding of the religious groups. The approach is pat, slick, one is tempted to say, acceptable in a magazine piece but hardly worthy of a chapter in a serious book.

However, one is forced to temper criticism of Houriet considering the difficulty of the subject matter. The project he undertook was immense and the nature of the subject chimerical. What one day seems significant in the counter-culture may the next day prove peripheral. So much of the counter-culture is changing from moment to moment one is hard pressed to resist the temptation to speculate, project and encompass the changes taking place right before the chronicler's eyes. That's one reason why so much presently being written about the subject winds up sounding like gibberish. It's like trying to write an essay on the surface of a spinning top.

One emotion that pervades *Getting Back Together* is optimism. The author quotes and then repeatedly refers back to one communard who says of the communal effort, "It's getting better. We can't see how, our egos interfere . . . but we're all going to make it." The new breed of communes as opposed to the earlier unsuccessful religious commune of the 19th century are rooted in something much more substantial than escaping the burdens of this world. The people who have formed them are trying to create a different type of world but that world is still located on this earth. There are still plenty of drop cities and rural freakouts around. But most communes that merit the name have moved past that fragmented state and are looking outward, trying to form larger communities, villages and townships, the bare bones of a new society. Their dreams of changing the world by their personal example are still farfetched and in the end they may not make it but even in the brief few years of this latest communal revival, they have proven that there is something to be gained from coming together.

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 435)

cave, but I have no doubt that finding it would do me a world of good. I especially like Blenkinsopp's suggestion of keeping Christmas as a reproach—something I've been doing all along, without being aware of it. We should start work now on a liturgy of reproach for next Christmas, replacing the Kiss of Peace with the Look of Reproach and making other appropriate substitutions.

Only one thing bothers me about Blenkinsopp's highly creative approach to Christmas. He keeps mentioning a "Divine Child." I assume that he means "divine in the sense of, "My, Mrs. Mudge, what a divine child you have there. Looks just like his father." I don't know, though—he keeps capitalizing the phrase, and that looks suspicious. And, come to think of it, what child? Is it possible that an overdose of symbolism, like overexposure to the sun, has left poor Blenkinsopp slightly addled on this subject? It's happened before. Often enough, in fact, to make one wonder, "Why Keep On Reading Theologians?" JOHN MCCUDDEN

Notre Dame, Ind.

REPLY: If the cave and the cosmic and psychic center represent an overdose of symbolism for Mr. McCudden that's his problem not mine. I should at least thank him for providing an excellent illustration of one aspect of the problem dealt with in my article.

As for the Divine Child, if McCudden wants it in lower case that's all right with me. A capital means that the word is somehow special. To spell out how I think Jesus is *special* was not, I thought, called for in the circumstances. Nor would I want to inflict more theology on the surfeited Mr. McCudden when he should be reading poets, novelists and historians of religion to find out what symbolic truth is all about. JOSEPH BLENKINSOPP

On Being Bi-Dialectical

Tampa, Fla.

To the Editors: Dorothy Z. Seymour's article "Black Children, Black Speech" [Nov. 19] provides excellent background on a very real problem for teachers in ghetto schools, and it concludes with what seems to me an intelligent and enlightened statement: "The problem then appears to be one of giving these children the ability to speak (and read) Standard English without denigrating the vernacular and those who use it, or even affecting the ability to use it."

This has long been my position regarding all types of variant speech patterns. Nonetheless, I have been disturbed over the years by statements of eminent linguists (James Sledd and Wayne O'Neill, among others) that teaching students to be bi-dialectal is impossible. I've been further disturbed by eminent educators such as Charles Weingartner, who says unequivocally, "Black kids don't want to talk like Charlie. Try to foist white speech on them and you turn them off to all education." Finally, I've been disturbed by many eminent black educators who echo Professor Toni Cade of Rutgers, who says, "If you want to get ahead in this country, you must master the language of the ruling class."

It occurred to me last spring that successful blacks who had emerged from the ghetto might know what teachers should do about ghetto language.

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They would know better than anyone else whether or not an upwardly mobile ghetto-dweller must learn "Charlie-talk." They would know whether direct instruction on standard dialect in school was helpful or psychologically damaging.

On May 15, 1971, Mr. Larry McCurry and I mailed 110 questionnaires to successful blacks throughout the country. Of the 19 usable responses, 13 were from middle-class blacks who had not been reared in the ghetto. We had only six from people of ghetto origin. Here are their responses.

1. Was the kind of English you learned as a child basically a "ghetto" or "nonstandard English?" Yes, 6; No, 0.

2. Do you now regularly speak a type of English different from the type of English you learned in your childhood? Yes, 6; No, 0.

3. Have you retained your ability to speak your childhood type of English even though you have acquired another kind of English so that now you speak two dialects and can shift consciously from one to the other? In short are you bi-dialectal? Yes, 6; No, 0.

4. Donald J. Lloyd says, "Change of speech will follow, not precede, (a child's) . . . decision to make his way out of the world he was born to." In other words, unless a child decides to leave the ghetto, drilling him on "preferred speech patterns" is a waste of time. Do you agree with this statement? Yes, 4; No, 2.

5. Do you believe that drill on standard English in school was helpful in changing your dialect? Yes, 3; No, 3.

6. Do you remember that drill on standard English in school caused you to feel insecure and to feel that your family and social group were inferior? Yes, 2; No, 4.

7. Can you remember the specific time at which you decided to leave the ghetto and change your language? Yes, 1; No, 4.

8. Do you believe that the following is an intelligent statement? "Language Arts and English classes in school should concentrate on giving students many diversified experiences of all kinds and connecting those experiences with language, rather than drilling on a socially acceptable language pattern." Yes, 6; No, 0.

9. Do you believe this is an intelligent statement? "Because society puts such a premium on a certain kind of English, schools should indoctrinate students to recognize the importance of this kind of English and should drill them on the correct use of this kind of English." Yes, 3; No, 3.

It is interesting to compare the responses of blacks who came from the ghetto with the responses of those from middle-class backgrounds:

Item 3: Whereas all the ghetto-origin blacks believe themselves now to be bi-dialectal, only 3 of the 9 middle-class-origin blacks believe themselves to be bi-dialectal.

Item 4: Whereas two-thirds of the ghetto-origin blacks think that drill is a waste of time until a child has determined to leave the ghetto, exactly two-thirds of the middle-class blacks believe the drill is worthwhile.

Item 5: Whereas half the ghetto-origin blacks think that drill on standard English helped them in school, five out of seven of the middle-class-origin blacks thought it did not help.

Item 6: Only 2 in the ghetto group and 1 in the middle class group remembered that drill on standard English made him feel insecure.

Item 8: All respondents in both the ghetto group and the middle-class group believe that English classes should concentrate on providing diverse experiences and connecting them with language, rather than drilling on language patterns.

Item 9: Both groups are equally divided on whether or not schools should indoctrinate students to recognize the importance of standard English and drill them on its use.

The questionnaire was so quickly composed and the sample so small that the results are far from significant. Both groups, however, seem to agree that providing diversified experiences and connecting those experiences with language is preferable to drill in standard usage.

Nonetheless, I still accept Dorothy Seymour's conclusion that we should give "these children the ability to speak (and read) Standard English without denigrating the vernacular and those who use it, or even affecting the ability to use it."

One black response, however, sums up very well the attitude of a large segment of the black population: "Change the Hillbillys' way of talk."

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